

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 171740Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4806

INFO AMCONSUL MILAN

AMCONSUL NAPLES

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 18460

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJ: VIEWS OF PRI SECRETARY ON ITALIAN POLITICAL ISSUES

ODDO BIASINI, SECRETARY OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY (PRI), IN A CON-  
VERSATION DEC 16 WITH THE AMBASSADOR AND POLITICAL COUNSELOR,  
MADE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON SEVERAL PROBLEMS ON THE ITALIAN  
POLITICAL SCENE:

A. GOVERNMENT CRISIS: BIASINI IS WORRIED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY  
THAT THE SOCIALISTS (PSI) WILL PRECIPITATE A GOVERNMENT CRISIS  
IN JANUARY OR FEBRUARY, WITH A VIEW TO FORCING EARLY ELECTIONS.  
IN THIS, THEY ARE MOTIVATED BY THEIR BELIEF THAT SUCH EARLY  
ELECTIONS WOULD RESULT IN GAINS FOR THE PSI. ANTICIPATED ELEC-  
TIONS AS EARLY AS NEXT SPRING WOULD BE A DISASTER, IN BIASINI'S  
VIEW, PRIMARILY BECAUSE THE DC IS NOT READY AND COULD NOT GET  
READY. ELECTIONS NEXT FALL, IN OCTOBER OR NOVEMBER, COULD BE  
MANAGED, BUT ELECTIONS IN THE SPRING COULD ONLY RESULT IN FURTHER  
PSI AND PCI GAINS AND DC LOSSES. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION,  
BIASINI SAID HE WOULD NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT SOME IN  
THE DC MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO ACCEPT, IN LIEU OF EARLY ELECTIONS,  
A PSI PROPOSAL FOR A DC MINORITY GOVERNMENT SUPPORTED EXTERNALLY  
BY THE PSI AND PCI. THIS TOO WOULD BE A DISASTER BECAUSE IT WOULD  
BE IN EFFECT THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE.

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B. PUBLIC RELATIONS: WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED WITH BIASINI AND OTHERS IN PRI (AND OTHER PARTIES) NEED FOR EFFECTIVE PUBLIC RELATIONS. BIASINI AT THIS MEETING INTRODUCED PRI'S NEW MAN IN CHARGE OF PRESS RELATIONS, ENNIO CECCARINI, AN EXPERIENCED JOURNALIST (CURRENTLY WITH IL GIORNALE) WHO WAS CHOSEN AT LEAST IN PART BECAUSE HE SPEAKS ENGLISH AND CAN THEREFORE DEAL EASILY WITH THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE FOREIGN PRESS. WE WILL BE PURSUING SEVERAL PROJECTS WITH CECCARINI IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE, AN IDEA THAT HAS BIASINI'S FULL SUPPORT.

C. THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS: BIASINI COMMENTED THAT HE KNOWS BOTH ZACCAGNINI AND FORLANI EXTREMELY WELL. HE AND ZACCAGNINI COME FROM THE SAME AREA (RAVENNA) AND HAVE KNOWN EACH OTHER ALL OF THEIR LIVES. BIASINI FEELS CERTAIN THAT ZACCAGNINI WILL VOLUNTARILY RELINQUISH THE SECRETARYSHIP AT THE DC CONGRESS IN MARCH; RUMORS TO THE CONTRARY HE DISCOUNTS. HE ALSO BELIEVES THAT FORLANI IS FAR AND AWAY THE BEST CHOICE BECAUSE HE HAS THE RIGHT IDEAS (ANTI-COMMUNIST AND A CONVINCED DEMOCRAT), THE RIGHT IMAGE (NOT PART OF THE OLD GUARD, A MODERN MAN, HONEST), AND THE POSSIBILITY OF GETTING THE SECRETARYSHIP WITH THE WILLING SUPPORT OF AN OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THE PARTY. BIASINI BELIEVES FORLANI IS PLAYING HIS CARDS RIGHT (MOVING CAREFULLY WITHOUT BECOMING THE NOMINEE OF ANY PARTICULAR GROUP) AND THAT IT IS VIRTUALLY CERTAIN THAT HE WILL GET THE JOB.

2. COMMENT: IT IS CLEAR THAT, FOR THE SHORT RUN, THE SOCIALISTS AND ANTICIPATED ELECTIONS ARE BIASINI'S MAJOR WORRIES. HE FEELS VERY UNCERTAIN ABOUT THE CHOICE THE SOCIALISTS WILL ULTIMATELY MAKE (BETWEEN COOPERATION WITH THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS OR THE COMMUNISTS), AND HE AGAIN EXPRESSED HIS PLEASURE AT OUR INVITATION OF DE MARTINO TO THE US AND HOPES THAT SUCH A VISIT WILL MAKE SOME IMPACT ON HIM. HE SEEMS TO FEEL THAT IF THE DC HAS AT LEAST UNTIL FALL IT WILL BE ABLE TO PULL ITSELF TOGETHER AND WAGE A REASONABLY GOOD ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN. VOLPE

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